



LETTERBOX SURPRISE

Congratulations! You've been invited to take part in a mission.

For this mission, you're going to be a detective, searching for the most magical, mysterious, monstrous and microscopic items you can find... all without leaving home. You can get someone living with you to join in too!

We'll then use our imaginations to create and illustrate a poem or story. Use the tools inside this letter to help you. This should include a notepad, some pencils or crayons, a magnifying glass, a bag and some yellow card to write the finished piece. There's also an example every step of the way to give you some ideas... so let's begin!



STEP 1 – COLLECTING THE EVIDENCE

In order to start, we need to write up a few lists of 5. We can use our magnifying glasses to get the answers:

- 1 – What are the five **brightest things** in your home?
(Or instead – a bigger challenge – find 5 things that are **YELLOW** or **GREEN**)
- 2 – What are the five most interesting **heavy or light things**?
- 3 – Write down five things that are either **hot or cold** (be careful not to touch!)
- 4 – Write down 5 things that are either **loud or super quiet**
- 5 – What are the five most **magical or mysterious things**?



Tip: You can create other lists, such as: things that are dry, wet, soft, hard, circular, rectangular, huge, miniscule... If you have someone else at home helping you, maybe they can do the exercise too. How different are their answers from yours?

Here are some examples. Notice how there's an extra detail for each of the items:

Brightest things:

A rainbow Blu-Tacked to the window
A bowl full of lemons
My brother's smile over the phone
The bathroom light at midnight
The gold envelope in my hand

Green:

The cushion in my room
Broccoli left on the dinner plate
My mouthwash on the shelf
A fallen leaf from the flowerpot
My favourite shirt

Light and heavy:

A fly buzzing around the kitchen
Tissue paper in the bin
Steam from the kettle
A full bathtub
The vacuum cleaner on the weekend!

Quiet and loud:

The TV in the afternoon
My old, worn slippers
A crisp packet popping open
The microwave ping!
Turning the page on my favourite book

Magical or Mysterious:

The front door – a portal to another world
Water speeding out of the kitchen tap
My mother's laugh filling the room
The sound of voices next door
The missing remote control



STEP 2 – TIME FOR QUESTIONING

This task requires heaps of imagination... Are you ready?

A) **FIRST**, find the most interesting item from any of your lists. Now imagine it could talk back to you. What questions would you ask it? Think of **five very unusual things to ask!** If you have plenty of ideas, keep writing more questions until you have 10.



Tip: Don't worry about being able to answer any of the questions you come up with although, if you want, you can use your imagination to answer them afterwards!

B) **THEN**, see if you can answer this ONE question in at least FIVE different ways: **What does the item you have chosen dream of?** You can make it silly or surprising or sad or all of these! The more detail you add, the better the result.

Here are some examples:

A) The missing remote control

Where are you? (Ok, too obvious!)

When do you roll your eyes at the screen?

What makes you see red?

Do you gossip with all the other remotes when humans are asleep?

What language do you speak?

A) Steam from the kettle:

Why do you dance away from the water?

Who are your friends?

Are you afraid of the dark?

How much do you weigh?

Where would you most like to go?

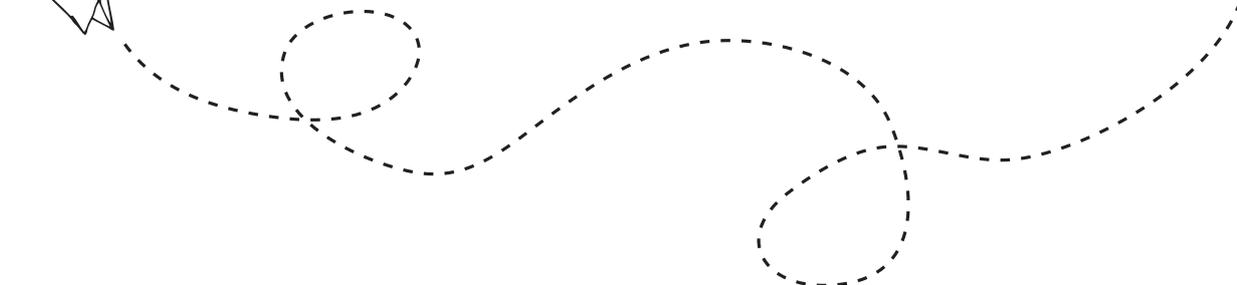
B) What the mouthwash on the shelf dreams of

My mouthwash dreams of a room made of bubbles

My mouthwash dreams of marrying the mint chocolate ice cream

My mouthwash dreams of shiny teeth and water slides

My mouthwash dreams of boiled monsters' sweets in a rattling jar





STEP 3 – MIXING PEOPLE AND THINGS!

Here we're going to get extra creative, using the words 'as' and 'like' to compare people and things. This is the **toughest challenge**, so have someone at home help you, or closely follow the examples if you find it difficult.

A) **FIRST**, think of someone important to you (your best friend, maybe, or someone in your home... or it could be a favourite sports person or character from a TV programme). Write their name down here

B) **NEXT**, try to think about what they are like. Are they loud/quiet? Are they shy or funny? Think about what they usually wear, how they act, what they do. Can you use any of these things about them to compare with an item from your lists, using the words 'as' or 'like'?

Write it down like this:

___[something belonging to the person]___ is like ___[something from your lists]___

See if you can write four or five things.



Tip: If you've chosen someone important to you at home, think about something you like about them – their laugh, their friendliness, their imagination, their washing up skills, absolutely anything! – and see what else on your lists you can use to compare them to! If it's something about someone famous (e.g. a football player or a singer), what are they most known for? Maybe you'll write about Messi's trainers, Beyoncé's voice, the Lion King's determination!

Here's an example:

A) **Some people to choose from:** *My mum, David Attenborough, Malorie Blackman, my best friend, Nadiya Hussain, the Queen...*

B) Let's go back to our lists to compare **the Queen** with something in our home... *Bright, loud, mysterious, heavy...*

What's *heavy* about the Queen or something she wears? *Her crown (it's also bright and gold!)*

The Queen's crown is as heavy as a full bathtub

The Queen's crown is as heavy as the vacuum on the weekend

The Queen's crown is bright like a bowl full of lemons

The Queen's crown is bright like my bathroom light at midnight...

To make it even more interesting, we'll change the words around:

The Queen's crown is as heavy as a bath full of diamonds

To make it even more exciting than that we can get rid of the 'like' and the 'as' from each line:

The Queen's crown is a bath full of diamonds

The Queen's crown is a weekend vacuum cleaner

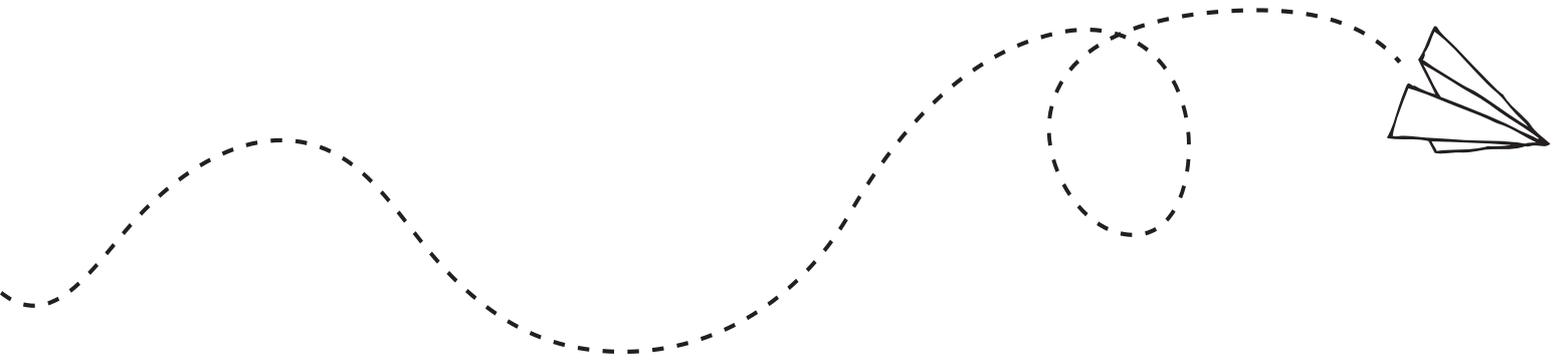
The Queen's crown is a bathroom light at midnight...

Other examples:

Remember, something else that's in the list as being bright is **'my brother's smile'**...

We could say: *My brother's smile is bright like a bowl full of lemons*

Or we could just say: *My brother's smile is a bowl full of lemons etc.*



STEP 4 - FINAL SHOWDOWN!

Look over what you've written so far, and pick your favourite lines. See if you can improve it even more by adding surprising details. Write up to ten lines in total.

If you've picked the questions exercise, and you want to go even further, you can create a story by answering the questions. *Where did the remote go? Maybe it's gone on an adventure! Or the broccoli makes a new friend with the stew peas!*



Tip: You could stretch your imagination even further by creating a recipe or a set of instructions: *How to make a front door... A recipe for Messi's trainers...*

Once you're happy with what you've written, copy it neatly onto the card and draw or decorate it however you want.

WELL DONE! MISSION COMPLETED!



If you'd like to share any of your writing, send it through to writing@ministryofstories.org